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BUST OF FRANCE IN BATTLE ARRAY

BY L. DRIVIER, SCULPTOR

*From the cover of the Paris monthly "L'Illustration" Christmas Number 1916
(See page 23)*

France in Battle-Flame

By EDWIN MARKHAM

O France, rose-hearted France,
You seemed of old the spirit of wingèd dance—
Light as a leaf that circles in the sky,
Light as a bubble when the billows fly.
We had forgot that in you burned a spark
That lit with dawn the spirit of Jeanne d'Arc:
We had forgot that in you burned the flame
With which Corday and Roland wreathed your name.
Then suddenly from the summer sky were hurled
War's mad incredible thunders on the world;
And at the sound we saw your soul upstart
To fold your stricken people to your heart.
Erect, imperious, you stood and smiled,
Your eyes divinely wild—
A sudden light upon your lifted face,
A splendor fallen from a starry place.

Debonair, delicate France,
Spirit of light, spirit of young romance,
Now we behold you dim in the battle-dust,
Roused, reticent, invincible, august.
We see you, a mother of sorrows, where you stand
The sword of heaven alive within your hand,
The lilies in your hair
Blood-spattered from the crown of thorns you wear.
Too high you stand for fears—
Too still and terrible for mortal tears.

O France of the world's desire,
O France new-lighted by supernal fire,
Wrapt in your battle-flame,
All nations take a splendor from your name:
All souls are toucht to greatness by your soul.
In you we are reborn to noble dreams—
In you we see again the sacred gleams
From man's immortal goal.
The faith that rises from you as a star
Will light the ages coming from afar,
When men shall band in one confederate fate
To build the beauty of the Comrade State.

Edwin Markham